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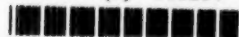
Agenda item 94

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Letter dated 17 December 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to operative paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 58/15 of 3 December 2003, in which the Assembly welcomed the decision of the State of Qatar to host an international conference to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in November 2004, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the speeches of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Misnad, Consort of His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar and President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, and His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, delivered at the session of the Doha International Conference for the Family on 29 and 30 November 2004, respectively (see annexes I and II). I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 94.

(Signed) Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex I

[Original: Arabic]

**Speech by H. H. Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Misnad
At
The Doha International Conference for the Family**

Doha

Monday, 29 November 2004

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,
Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, esteemed audience,

Welcome to Doha, which has great pleasure in hosting the final proceedings of the International Decade of the Family.

Our conference today has been preceded by a series of conferences and meetings in more than one city in more than one continent. All these forums stressed the importance of the family for all humankind irrespective of cultural roots and trends or political inclinations and national backgrounds.

There is no better common denominator, despite occasional divergence and conflict, than strong faith in the sanctity of the family, which is blessed by all religions for its strong ties between men and women consistent with the human desire to beget and rear new generations, which help to build civilization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Doha International Conference for the Family is another occasion that highlights the renewed need to strengthen the role of the family in public life. It is also another opportunity to discuss and promote the role of this basic social unit and elevate its status as a protector of higher values and ideals as well as to prepare it for its role as a safety valve that reduces many of the rising pressures on the individual and safeguards the health and stability of society.

Your conference will address crucial issues regarding the future of the family in the third millennium, especially because the family faces major challenges which call for serious reflection and prompt action. It has also begun to take on new responsibilities and implement them in the best manner.

The concept of the family itself is sometimes violated through attempts to redefine it in a manner contrary to religion and the established norms of society and human conscience. This should be confronted, because claims of modernity should not be used to justify circumventing deep-rooted religious, social and cultural values that have long protected the family.

An equally daunting task is the new functions the family should undertake in addition to childrearing, which include full responsibility for development, so that the enlightened family can provide an umbrella of security for the country as a whole.

Dear participants,

The family in today's world undertakes increasing tasks. By bringing up the younger generation it helps to promote a culture of dialogue and tolerance, because it remains the first institution where one learns the art of managing relations with others and from which one receives early impressions of the world and other people.

Its importance as a creative educational institution requires us to constantly support, empower and strengthen it to enable it to carry out its role in preparing open minds that accept difference of opinion, avoid bigotry, accept evidence and proof and conduct dialogue, learning to welcome and not reject the Other, thereby avoiding the danger of turning inward. This will lay a foundation to strengthen democratic culture in harmony with the increasing call to promote dialogue of cultures and opportunities for coexistence among nations.

In this respect, the United Nations General Assembly resolution to mark the International Decade of the Family confirms that the family is today among the active international actors capable of positively influencing the course of the present and future, because of its ability to build minds, contribute to development and participate in enhancing dialogue and understanding.

Therefore, at the inception of a new decade for the family, we are called upon to continue to work together to overcome the legal, political, economic and social difficulties that endanger the structure of the family or prevent it from fulfilling its noble mission. The alleviation of poverty and illiteracy protects the family from the dangers of disintegration and makes it a strategic instrument for progress and development.

In order for the family to be given the care it deserves, all national programmes that deal with this basic social institution must be coordinated, because the issues and problems of the family cannot be addressed piecemeal. A comprehensive policy is needed that recognizes that the family has functions beyond its narrow social responsibility and that the support given to the family structure can promote national development and strengthen the spirit of coexistence and cooperation among peoples.

Hence the need for new thinking that does not consider the family part of the problem, but rather part of the solution; that sees it not as a burden on development but as one of its driving forces.

That choice requires, in my judgement, the adoption of an instrument that guarantees the family's rights and integrates it as a major element in all plans for local, regional and international development. This is what we hope the Doha Declaration, to be issued by this conference, will achieve.

Despite its significance, this Declaration in itself will not be sufficient without a mechanism capable of developing and implementing its objectives.

In this context, I call for consideration of establishing a centre for family research and studies whose first task would be to formulate a conceptual vision of the family for the third millennium. The centre would also be called on to take initiatives aimed at coordinating and complementing national, regional and international programmes in the field through preparation of research and studies, organization of seminars and conferences and provision of logistical support for the

purpose of placing the family within a comprehensive national and international vision, making it an axis for the development plans for all sectors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I again welcome you to this meeting and thank you for attending this conference. Your presence will enrich its deliberations. I am fully confident that the religious, political, intellectual and media expertise you represent will assist us to deepen the discussion and analysis of various crucial issues on its agenda. This will definitely enable us to issue practical findings that strengthen our determination to allow the family to take on the role it should play in modern societies that preserve values and understand the challenges of the third millennium. I take this opportunity to thank Professor Richard Wilkens, Chairman of the International Centre for Family Policies for his fruitful efforts. I wish you all a good stay in Qatar.

Walsalam Alaykum Wa Rahmat Allah Wa Brakatuh.

Annex II

[Original: Arabic]

**Speech by H. E. Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani
First Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister for Foreign Affairs
On Family and Globalization
Delivered at the Doha International Conference for the Family**

Doha, Qatar

29-30 November 2004

A Summary of Dialogue on Family and Globalization

The topic of family and globalization is extensive and has many ramifications. Here, I will tackle only some of the aspects of this vast theme in order to stimulate discussion and debate.

- Family is one of the oldest forms of social institution: thus, it has generated cultural and educational learning which is stimulated by values and ethics, constituting moral traits and values to be adopted and followed.
- It is well known that the impact of globalization also extends to economic, social, cultural and even political domains. The technological development of the communications media, mutual contacts and information technology has affected local cultures and living patterns to a great extent by transmitting the elements of global cultures across borders through the phenomenon of globalization. This change is somewhat relative, according to how deeply rooted the community's customs are. Hence, balanced modernization that does not ignore the basic elements of social identity remains a possibility to be considered in efforts to achieve comprehensive development.
- In our societies in particular, we find that globalization has imposed a new economic and social reality where the old is coexisting with the new to various degrees. New social problems are emerging, the most salient of which are the transformations affecting the very traditional form of the family and its function. That transformation is the result of many interrelated factors that cannot be ascribed to globalization alone; in our societies the family is under pressure to adapt and modernize as a result of increased economic wealth.
- Under this theme, education of women is one of the main aspects of development, and has led to changes in the woman's status in the family, especially in exercising her education role. The participation of women in the labour market has had its own repercussions on the family, particularly as regards women's relations with men. The complementarity of family members and the cooperation among them has had a positive effect on the upbringing of children.
- Women, therefore, have a dual role: a family as well as a societal function. However, social services are needed to enable women to fulfil those roles to the fullest extent.

- The new situation has produced a change in the shape of the family that has affected both the extended and nuclear family. Indications of economic independence of family members have begun to appear as a result of increased income and policies on housing, loans and other factors that have helped to increase independence.
- Subsequently, a transformation has occurred in the social upbringing of family members, from the tradition of collective work in accordance with traditional values, to work done by the nuclear family in addition to social services.
- Absolute parental authority has been affected by the appearance of new partners in the process of socialization.
- This new reality, however, creates new problems, such as the conflict between the different role players in the process of childrearing, late marriages, rising divorce rates and low birth rates.
- We cannot claim that society has adopted a constant and stable approach to dealing with the new situation of the family. Yet it is of great concern to Governments, which have adopted legislation, measures, projects and plans to improve the situation of the family.
- The crucial point is that family policies must be planned and implemented as being an integral part of comprehensive social development policy based on intellect, knowledge, wisdom and learning from the experiences of others, since transformation and change have become a reality that can no longer be denied.